

Maryland Home Inspectors Standards of Practice.

.04 Structural System.

A. A home inspector shall visually inspect the structural system, including the structural components including foundation and framing.

B. Probing.

(1) A home inspector shall probe a representative number of structural components where deterioration is suspected or where clear indications of possible deterioration exist.

(2) Probing is not required:

(a) If it will damage any finished surface; or

(b) Where no deterioration is visible.

C. A home inspector shall describe the structural system, including the:

(1) Foundation, and report the methods used to inspect the under-floor crawl spaces and basements;

(2) Floor structure;

(3) Wall structure;

(4) Ceiling structure; and

(5) Roof structure, and report the methods used to inspect the attic.

D. A home inspector is not required to:

(1) Provide any engineering service; or

(2) Offer an opinion as to the adequacy of any structural system or component.

.05 Exterior.

A. A home inspector shall visually inspect the home exterior, including:

(1) Exterior wall covering, flashing, and trim;

(2) All exterior doors;

(3) Attached decks, balconies, stoops, steps, porches, and their associated railings;

(4) Eaves, soffits, and fascias that are accessible from the ground level;

(5) Vegetation, grading, surface drainage, and retaining walls on the property if any of these may adversely affect the building; and

(6) Walkways, patios, and driveways leading to dwelling entrances.

B. A home inspector shall describe the exterior wall covering.

C. A home inspector is not required to inspect any of the following:

(1) Screening, shutters, awnings, and similar seasonal accessories:

(2) Fences;

(3) Geological, geotechnical, or hydrological conditions;

(4) Recreational facilities;

(5) Outbuildings;

(6) Seawalls, break-walls, and docks; or

(7) Erosion control and earth stabilization measures.

.06 Roof System.

A. A home inspector shall visually inspect a roof system, including:

(1) The roof covering;

(2) Roof drainage systems;

(3) Flashings; and

(4) Skylights, chimneys, and exterior and roof penetrations.

B. A home inspector shall describe the roof covering and report the methods used to inspect the roof.

C. A home inspector is not required to:

(1) Inspect:

(a) Antennae;

(b) Interiors of flues or chimneys that are not readily accessible; or

(c) Other installed accessories;

(2) Walk on or access a roof where it could damage the roof or roofing material or be unsafe for the home inspector;

(3) Remove snow, ice, debris, or other conditions that prohibit the observation of the roof surfaces; or

(4) Determine:

- (a) The remaining life expectancy of roof coverings;
- (b) The presence or absence of hail damage;
- (c) Manufacturer's defects;
- (d) Installation methods; or
- (e) The number of layers of roofing material.

.07 Plumbing System.

A. A home inspector shall visually inspect the plumbing system, including:

- (1) Interior water supply and distribution systems, including all fixtures and faucets;
- (2) Drain, waste, and vent systems, including all fixtures;
- (3) Water heating equipment;
- (4) Vent systems, flues, and chimneys;
- (5) Fuel storage and fuel distribution systems;
- (6) Drainage sumps, sump pumps, and related piping;
- (7) The functional flow of all fixtures and faucets; and
- (8) The functional drainage of all fixtures.

B. A home inspector shall describe the plumbing system, including:

- (1) Water supply, drain, waste, and vent piping materials;
- (2) Water heating equipment, including the energy source; and
- (3) The location of main water and main fuel shut-off valves.

C. A home inspector is not required to:

- (1) Inspect any of the following:
 - (a) Clothes washing machine connections;
 - (b) Interiors of flues or chimneys that are not readily accessible;
 - (c) Wells, well pumps, or water storage related equipment;
 - (d) Water conditioning systems;

- (e) Solar water heating systems;
- (f) Fire and lawn sprinkler systems; or
- (g) Private waste disposal systems;
- (2) Determine:
 - (a) Whether water supply and waste disposal systems are public or private; or
 - (b) The quantity or quality of the water supply; or
- (3) Operate safety valves or shut-off valves.

.08 Electrical Systems.

A. A home inspector shall visually inspect an electrical system, including:

- (1) The service drop;
- (2) Service entrance conductors, cables, and raceways;
- (3) Service equipment and main disconnects;
- (4) Service grounding;
- (5) Interior components of service panels and subpanels;
- (6) Conductors;
- (7) Overcurrent protection devices;
- (8) A representative number of installed lighting fixtures, switches, and receptacles;
- (9) Ground fault and arc fault circuit interrupters; and
- (10) The general condition of visible branch circuit conductors that may constitute a hazard to the occupant or the structure by reason of improper use or installation of electrical components.

B. A home inspector shall describe the electrical system, including the:

- (1) Amperage and voltage rating of the service;
- (2) Location of main disconnect and subpanels; and
- (3) Wiring methods.

C. If applicable, a home inspector shall include in a written report the:

- (1) Presence of solid conductor aluminum branch circuit wiring; and

(2) Absence of smoke detectors.

D. A home inspector is not required to:

(1) Inspect:

(a) Remote control devices, unless the device is the only control device;

(b) Alarm systems and components;

(c) Low voltage wiring systems and components; or

(d) Ancillary wiring, systems, and components that are not a part of the primary electrical power distribution system; or

(2) Measure amperage, voltage, or impedance.

.09 Heating System.

A. A home inspector shall visually inspect:

(1) Installed heating equipment;

(2) Vent systems, flues, and chimneys; and

(3) Heating distribution.

B. A home inspector shall describe energy sources and heating methods by distinguishing characteristics and means of distribution.

C. A home inspector is not required to:

(1) Inspect:

(a) Flue or chimney interiors that are not readily accessible;

(b) Heat exchangers;

(c) Humidifiers or dehumidifiers;

(d) Electronic air filters; or

(e) Solar space heating systems; or

(2) Determine the adequacy of the heat system or the distribution balance.

.10 Air-Conditioning System.

A. A home inspector shall inspect the installed central and through-wall cooling equipment.

B. A home inspector shall describe energy sources and cooling methods by distinguishing characteristics and means of distribution.

C. A home inspector is not required to:

- (1) Inspect electronic air filters; or
- (2) Determine the adequacy of the cooling system or the distribution balance.

.11 Interior.

A. A home inspector shall visually inspect:

- (1) Walls, ceilings, and floors;
- (2) Steps, stairways, and railings;
- (3) Countertops and a representative number of installed cabinets;
- (4) A representative number of doors and windows; and
- (5) Garage doors and garage door operators.

B. A home inspector is not required to inspect:

- (1) Paint, wallpaper, and other finish treatments;
- (2) Carpeting;
- (3) Window treatments;
- (4) Central vacuum systems;
- (5) Household appliances; or
- (6) Recreational facilities.

.12 Insulation and Ventilation.

A. A home inspector shall visually inspect:

- (1) Insulation and vapor retarders in unfinished spaces;
- (2) Ventilation of attics and foundation areas; and
- (3) Mechanical ventilation systems.

B. A home inspector shall describe:

- (1) Insulation and vapor retarders in unfinished spaces; and

(2) If applicable, the absence of insulation in unfinished spaces at conditioned surfaces.

C. A home inspector is not required to:

- (1) Disturb insulation or vapor retarders; or
- (2) Determine indoor air quality.

.13 Fireplaces and Solid Fuel Burning Appliances.

A. A home inspector shall visually inspect:

- (1) System components of fireplaces and solid fuel burning appliances; and
- (2) Vent systems, flues, and chimneys.

B. A home inspector shall describe:

- (1) Fireplaces and solid fuel burning appliances; and
- (2) Chimneys.

C. A home inspector is not required to:

- (1) Inspect any of the following:
 - (a) Interiors of flues or chimneys;
 - (b) Firescreens and doors;
 - (c) Seals and gaskets;
 - (d) Automatic fuel feed devices;
 - (e) Mantles and fireplace surrounds;
 - (f) Combustion make-up air devices; or
 - (g) Gravity-controlled and fan-assisted heat distribution assists;
- (2) Ignite or extinguish fires;
- (3) Determine draft characteristics; or
- (4) Move fireplace inserts or stove or firebox contents.

09.36.06.01 (Maryland Inspectors Code of Ethics)

.01 Responsibilities to the Public.

A home inspector shall:

A. Act as an impartial third party;

B. Discharge the home inspector's duties:

(1) With integrity and fidelity to the public;

(2) With fairness and objectivity to all parties; and

(3) Without bias to any party;

C. Always act in good faith towards a client;

D. Express an opinion only if it is based on practical experience and personal knowledge;

E. Promptly inform a client of any business association, interest, or circumstance that may influence the home inspector's judgment or the quality of the home inspector's inspection service to the client; and

F. Make every effort to uphold, maintain, and improve the professional practice, integrity, and reputation of the home inspection industry.

09.36.06.02

.02 Prohibitions.

A. A home inspector may not:

(1) Except under circumstances in which the safety, health, property, or welfare of the public is endangered, disclose any information concerning the results of an inspection without the approval of the client for whom the inspection was performed;

(2) Accept compensation, financial or otherwise, from more than one interested party for the same service on the same property unless the home inspector makes full disclosure to all interested parties and obtains the consent of all interested parties; or

(3) Accept or offer a commission or allowance, directly or indirectly, to or from another party dealing with the client in connection with home inspection services for which the home inspector is responsible.

B. A home inspector may not:

(1) Sell or offer to sell products for the repair of defects or the correction of deficiencies disclosed during an inspection to the client for a period of 1 year from the date of the inspection;

(2) Provide or offer to provide services to repair defects or correct deficiencies disclosed during an inspection for a period of 1 year from the date of the inspection; or

(3) Express an appraisal or opinion of the market value of the inspected property within the context of the inspection.

09.36.06.03

.03 Additional Services.

A home inspector may provide additional inspection services to the client if the home inspector discloses to the client that the additional inspection services are not part of the home inspection.

09.36.06.04

.04 Conflicts of Interest.

A. A home inspector shall avoid conflicts of interest with a client or an owner of property that is subject to an inspection by the home inspector.

B. If a conflict appears unavoidable, the home inspector shall disclose promptly and fully all circumstances of the conflict to the client.